

# MINERAL INDUSTRY SURVEYS

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**Bismuth, Quarterly**

## BISMUTH IN THE SECOND QUARTER 1996

Domestic consumption of bismuth in the second quarter of 1996 was 18% lower than in the first quarter, and 19% lower than in the second quarter of 1995. The weakest comparative showing in consumption was in the metallurgical sector.

On April 15, 1996, ASARCO Incorporated announced that it had reached agreement with the City of Omaha, NE, to cease all operations at its Omaha refinery by February 1, 1998, and remediate the property for use as a park. The company stopped lead refining at Omaha on June 1, 1996, but plans to continue processing other materials, including bismuth, at the plant for another year and a half.

No bismuth was sold from the Defense National Stockpile during the second quarter. The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) announced its intention to change from a sealed bid auction to negotiated sales for the disposition of bismuth contained in the Stockpile.

The average weekly published dealer price for bismuth continued to drop, from \$3.97 per

pound at the beginning of the quarter to \$3.55 per pound at the end. Anticipated supply appears adequate to meet expected demand despite the forthcoming shut down of the only domestic primary source, Asarco's Omaha, NE, plant.

**Update:**

The DLA made its first solicitation under the negotiated sales system on August 14, 1996. Bids will be opened on September 4. If none are accepted, the DLA will attempt to negotiate terms of the sale with the companies who offered bids. Any part of the 83,500 kilograms available that is not sold that day will be offered on September 25 and the third Wednesday of each following month until all the material has been sold.

The average weekly dealer published price showed signs of stabilization. It continued its decline to \$3.38 per pound at the end of the first week in August, but rose to \$3.40 by mid-month.

TABLE 1  
SALIENT BISMUTH STATISTICS 1/

(Kilograms, bismuth content)

	1995 p/	1996		
		First quarter	Second quarter	Year to date
Consumption by use:				
Chemicals and other uses 2/	(3/)	255,000	218,000	473,000
Fusible alloys and metallurgical additives	(3/)	150,000	115,000	265,000
Imports for consumption 4/	1,450,000	441,000	NA	NA
Exports 4/	261,000	12,100	NA	NA
Price per pound, dealer, end of period 5/	\$4.20	\$3.97	\$3.55	XX
Stocks, end of period, consumer	359,000	192,000	126,000	XX

p/ Preliminary. r/ Revised. NA Not available. XX Not applicable.

1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits, except prices.

2/ Includes industrial and laboratory chemicals, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, experimental, and other uses.

3/ Data not available, currently under review.

4/ Includes metal, alloys, and waste and scrap.

5/ Price data from Platt's Metals Week.

TABLE 2  
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF BISMUTH METAL, ALLOYS, AND WASTE AND SCRAP, BY COUNTRY 1/

(Kilograms, metal content)

Country	1995	1996				
	Year total	March	First quarter	April	May	Year to date
Belgium	636,000	60,400	171,000	54,300	74,800	300,000
Bolivia	28,300	--	--	--	--	--
Canada	83,900	2,400	7,830	25,100	21,200	54,200
China	82,600	--	69,800	18,700	--	88,600
Germany	1,360	147	200	--	13	213
Hong Kong	21,500	--	--	--	--	--
Japan	1,350	--	--	--	600	600
Korea, Republic of	10,000	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	444,000	52,400	137,000	29,000	47,600	213,000
Peru	10,900	--	19,500	--	--	19,500
Russia	15	--	--	--	--	--
Spain	250	--	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	131,000	10,400	35,900	8,700	27,300	71,800
Total	1,450,000	126,000	441,000	136,000	172,000	748,000

1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

TABLE 3  
U.S. EXPORTS OF BISMUTH METAL, ALLOYS, AND WASTE AND SCRAP, BY COUNTRY 1/

(Kilograms, metal content)

Country	1995	1996				
	Year total	March	First quarter	April	May	Year to date
Argentina	--	45	45	1	--	46
Belgium	157,000	--	--	18,000	--	18,000
Brazil	32	--	50	--	--	50
Canada	43,200	1,680	9,400	198	19,500	29,100
China	30,300	--	--	--	--	--
Dominican Republic	--	--	416	--	--	416
France	15,500	1,550	1,900	3,480	--	5,380
Hong Kong	80	--	--	14	7	21
Korea, Republic of	--	--	--	--	3	3
Ireland	414	--	--	--	--	--
Mexico	363	--	--	--	--	--
Netherlands	307	209	209	--	--	209
Saudi Arabia	1,480	--	--	--	--	--
Singapore	2,320	100	100	--	--	100
Switzerland	--	--	--	--	2,220	2,220
Taiwan	650	--	--	--	--	--
United Kingdom	9,680	--	--	--	--	--
Other	224	--	--	--	--	--
Total	261,000	3,590	12,100	21,700	21,700	55,600

1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.

Source: Bureau of the Census.